

Valley of Peace Lutheran Church (VoP) Response Plan to COVID-19

This plan was developed with thoughtful consideration of caring for our church community and caring for one another.

The values that shape the decisions in this document include:

The Valley of Peace Mission Statement which reads, “Living in God’s love and compassion, we are called to be disciples of Jesus Christ, as the Holy Spirit works through us for healing, justice, and peace.”

Our Reconciling in Christ Statement which includes, “Welcome to Valley of Peace Lutheran Church where Christians from every tradition, people new to the faith, believers, questioners, and questioning believers are one together in Christ Jesus. ...”

The safety and well-being of our congregation and community. “I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another” (John 13:34-35).

Our theology of the work of the Spirit in every part of our lives. The church is not a building, but the church is the people who are the body of Christ. “For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. For in one Spirit we are all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and all were made to drink of one Spirit” (1 Corinthians 12:12-13).

The following plan was also created with information received from the Minnesota Department of Health, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) and the Minneapolis Area Synod of the ELCA.

This document contains four levels of operations, with the final, or open building, level being Level 4. Under each level there are recommendations for building users, office and staff schedules, volunteers and small groups, worship services and cleaning schedules, as well as a response to a positive COVID-19 case within our community.

Although efforts will be made to make all users aware of the recommendations in this document, the COVID-19 Task Force recognizes that compliance with the recommendations may vary for different reasons such as users having different levels of understanding and recollection of the recommendations, or because the facts of any given situation might warrant varying from the recommendations. Although efforts will be made to keep this document current, knowledge and best practices regarding virus response change too rapidly for this document to consistently reflect the current state of knowledge. This document may be amended by either the COVID-19 Task Force or the Church Council.

The COVID-19 Task Force will monitor and make decisions to move levels. As we move through each level information will be communicated with church members and building users.

During the COVID-19 pandemic the All God's Children Learning Center (AGCLC) has remained open and operational because its services are deemed essential. The AGCLC board has developed a plan and policy for its operations. That information is not included in this document.

During the COVID-19 pandemic all people in the building (persons with AGCLC follow AGCLC policy) are required to wear a mask (per the Governor's Executive Order 20-81), social distance, and practice proper hygiene according to the Minnesota Department of Health. All areas must be disinfected after each use. Disinfectant wipes are located throughout the building. If anyone knows they have been exposed to COVID-19 it is required that they stay away from any on-site church activities for two weeks. If anyone has symptoms of COVID-19 it is required that they stay away from any on-site church activities for at least two weeks and until they are no longer ill.

Level One

We will operate at this level under the following conditions:

1. The church building is closed, (except that AGCLC remains open); **and**
2. there has not been a consistent two-week reduction in the number of reported COVID-19 cases, beginning July 1, in the following Minnesota counties: Hennepin, Washington, Anoka, Dakota, Ramsey, Wright, Scott. (This will be monitored by the COVID-19 Response Task Force.)

Building Users (not VoP groups)

- No building users inside the building.
- Building users may meet outside on VoP property but with no admission to the building.
- Building users must contact Parish Administrator Sally Daniels Herron to inform the church of a meeting on VoP property that will be outside of the building.

Office and Staff Schedule

- The church office is closed.
- The staff will work from home and occasionally go into the office for essential duties. ([see***](#))

Volunteers and Small Groups

- Small groups will meet online only.
- Only building maintenance and essential volunteers are allowed in the building. ([see***](#))

Worship Services

- All worship services will be online.
- Pastor Ashley will be the only staff member to record worship in the sanctuary.
- No weddings, funerals, or baptisms will be performed inside the sanctuary.
- Pastor Ashley will be available for pastoral care over the phone and online.

Cleaning Schedule

- Cleaning services will be maintained once a week for those areas not used by AGCLC. Upper-level restrooms cleaned twice a week.
- Individuals will disinfect encountered areas after each use. ([see***](#))

COVID-19 Positive Case Scenario

- Anyone who has been in the building and who has been exposed to or has tested positive for COVID-19, should contact Pastor Ashley immediately.
- While maintaining confidentiality, all VoP staff, AGCLC staff and essential volunteers will be informed of a positive COVID-19 case.
- Cleaning services will be informed.

Level Two

We will operate at this level under the following conditions:

1. Gatherings of 10 or fewer individuals are allowed by the Minnesota Department of Health; **and**
2. there has been a consistent two-week reduction in the number of reported COVID-19 cases, beginning July 1, in the following Minnesota counties: Hennepin, Washington, Anoka, Dakota, Ramsey, Wright, Scott. (This will be monitored by the COVID-19 Response Task Force.)

Building Users (not VoP groups)

- Building users of 10 or fewer individuals are allowed inside the building. ([see***](#))
- Building users may meet outside on VoP property, with limited admission to the building. ([see***](#))
- Building users may use upper-level restrooms only.
- Building users must contact Parish Administrator Sally Daniels Herron to inform the church of a meeting schedule and discuss feasibility.

Office and Staff Schedule

- The church office will be open on a part-time basis.
- The church staff will decide their schedule for work in the office. ([see***](#))

Volunteers and Small Groups

- Small groups of 10 or fewer individuals may meet in the Fireside Room, with open windows, weather permitting. ([see***](#))
- Parish Administrator Sally Daniels Herron must be contacted to schedule meetings in advance.

Worship Services

- All worship services will be online.
- Staff will decide their comfort level with multiple staff present to record worship in the sanctuary.
- Weddings, funerals, and baptisms with 10 or fewer individuals will be allowed in the sanctuary.
- Pastor Ashley will be available for pastoral care over the phone, online and for meetings with 10 or fewer individuals inside or outside the building. ([see***](#))

Cleaning Schedule

- Cleaning services will be maintained once a week for those areas not used by AGCLC. Upper-level restrooms cleaned twice a week.
- Individuals will disinfect encountered areas after use. ([see***](#))

COVID-19 Positive Case Scenario

- Anyone who has been in the building and who has been exposed to or has tested positive for COVID-19, should contact Pastor Ashley immediately.
- While maintaining confidentiality, all VoP staff, AGCLC staff, and essential volunteers will be informed of a positive COVID-19 case.
- Cleaning services will be informed.
- The church office and Fireside Room will be closed for seven days following that notification.

Level Three

We will operate at this level under the following conditions:

1. Gatherings of 50 or fewer individuals are allowed by the Minnesota Department of Health; **and**
2. state and local health officials determine that the risk of community transmission of the coronavirus in Minnesota is low;

Building Users (not VoP groups)

- Building users of 50 or fewer individuals are allowed inside the building. ([see***](#))
- Building users may meet outside with limited access to the building. ([see***](#))
- Building users will use upper-level restrooms only.
- Building users must contact Parish Administrator Sally Daniels Herron to inform the church of a meeting schedule and to discuss feasibility.

Office and Staff Schedule

- The church office will be open to its previous COVID-19 schedule.
- Church staff will decide their schedule for work in the office. ([see***](#))

Volunteers and Small Groups

- Small groups of 50 or fewer individuals may meet in the building, with recommended open windows, weather permitting. ([see***](#))
- All groups of 50 or fewer individuals will use discretion and defer to the group leader for safe practices for the individual group. ([see***](#))
- All groups must contact Parish Administrator Sally Daniels Herron to schedule meetings in advance.

Worship Services

- All worship services will be online.
- Staff will decide their comfort level with multiple staff and/or volunteers present to record worship in the sanctuary.
- Weddings, funerals, and baptisms in the sanctuary will be allowed with 50 or fewer individuals.
- Pastor Ashley will be available for pastoral care over the phone, online, and for meetings inside or outside with 50 or fewer individuals. ([see***](#))

Cleaning Schedule

- Cleaning services will be maintained once a week for those areas not used by AGCLC. Upper-level restrooms cleaned twice a week.
- Individuals will disinfect encountered areas after use. ([see***](#))

COVID-19 Positive Case Scenario

- Anyone who has been in the building and who has been exposed to or has tested positive for COVID-19, should contact Pastor Ashley immediately.
- While maintaining confidentiality, all VoP Staff, AGCLC staff, church members, and building users will be informed.
- Cleaning services will be informed.
- The church office and all church space will be closed for seven days following that notification.

Level Four (Open Building Level)

We will operate at this level under the following conditions:

1. There are no restrictions to the number of people gathered; **and**
2. the risk to vulnerable community members need not restrict in-person gatherings based on the Minnesota Department of Health.

While Open at Level 4 we will continue to practice safe hygiene.

Building Users (not VoP groups)

- The building will be open to all building users. ([see***](#))
- Users should contact Parish Administrator Sally Daniels Herron to inform the church of a meeting schedule and discuss feasibility.

Office and Staff Schedule

- The church office will be open at its previous COVID-19 schedule.
- The staff will resume its normal working hours in the office.

Volunteers and Small Groups

- The building will be open to all volunteers and small groups.
- Parish Administrator Sally Daniels Herron should be contacted to schedule meetings in advance.

Worship Services

- Worship will be in person and online services will be available.
- The pastor, staff, worship leaders and church leaders will set up best practices.

Cleaning Schedule

- Cleaning services will be maintained once a week for those areas not used by AGCLC.

COVID-19 Positive Case Scenario

- Anyone who has been in the building and who has been exposed to or has tested positive for COVID-19, should contact Pastor Ashley immediately.
- While maintaining confidentiality, all building users will be informed following that notification.
- Cleaning services will be informed.
- The church office and all church spaces will be closed for seven days following that notification.

***** During the COVID-19 pandemic all people in the building (persons with AGCLC follow AGCLC policy) are required to wear a mask (per the Governor's Executive Order 20-81), social distance, and practice proper hygiene according to the Minnesota Department of Health. All areas must be disinfected after use. Disinfectant wipes are located throughout the building. If anyone knows they have been exposed to COVID-19 it is required that they stay away from any on-site church activities for two weeks. If anyone has symptoms of COVID-19 it is required that they stay away from any on-site church activities for at least two weeks and until they are no longer ill.**

Thank you to the members of the COVID-19 Task Force: Paul Mikelson, Darcie Rodman, Jim Jasper, Ruth Larson, Sally Daniels Herron, Zack Carlson.

This document was approved by the Valley of Peace Church Council on August 18, 2020.

If you have any questions please contact Pastor Ashley Osborn at aosborn@valleyofpeace.org or 651-587-7506.

To schedule meetings and events with Parish Administrator Sally Daniels Herron please e-mail at sdaniels.herron@valleyofpeace.org or call the church office at 763-588-4611.



valley of peace
LUTHERAN CHURCH

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